

CLAIMS

1. A system for negotiating transportation contracts through a computer network, comprising:
 - 5 a database storing and maintaining identifying information related to a plurality of users, said users having registered with the system and being classified as either a shipper or a carrier;
 - 10 wherein said database also stores and maintains data associated with at least one request for quotation defining a particular shipper's transportation requirements and comprised of a plurality of transportation lanes;
 - 15 wherein one or more carriers access said system through the computer network to review said at least one request for quotation; and wherein each of said carriers can submit bids on one or more of the plurality of transportation lanes comprising said request for quotation.
 2. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the particular shipper can review bids submitted by said carriers, and then can award transportation lanes to one or more carriers based on said submitted bids.
 - 20 3. A system as recited in claim 2, wherein each of said carriers can review awards made by the particular shipper and can accept the award of one or more transportation lanes.

4. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein said at least one request for quotation further comprises one or more accessorial, and wherein, when said one or more carriers access said system through the computer network to review said at least one request for quotation, said carriers can also review said accessorial and can submit bids on said accessorial.

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5. A system as recited in claim 4, wherein the particular shipper can review bids submitted by said carriers for said lanes and accessorial, and then can award transportation lanes to one or more carriers based on said submitted bids.

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6. A system as recited in claim 5, wherein each of said carriers can review awards made by the particular shipper and can accept the award of one or more transportation lanes.

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7. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein said at least one request for quotation further comprises at least one FAK bidding matrix, and wherein, when said one or more carriers access said system through the computer network to review said at least one request for quotation, said carriers can also review said matrix and can submit bids on one or more transportation routes defined by said matrix.

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8. A system as recited in claim 7, wherein the particular shipper can review bids submitted by said carriers for said lanes and matrix, and then can award transportation lanes to one or more carriers based on said submitted bids.

9. A system as recited in claim 8, wherein each of said carriers can review awards made by the particular shipper and can accept the award of one or more transportation lanes.

10. A system as recited in claim 1, and furthering comprising a filtering mechanism, 5 thereby allowing each of said carriers to filter and view said transportation lanes comprising said at least one request for quotation based on one or more criteria.

11. A system as recited in claim 10, wherein said one or more criteria is selected from the group consisting of: origin, destination, range of miles, and equipment type.

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12. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein said computer network is the World Wide Web portion of the global Internet.

13. A system as recited in claim 12, wherein said system is accessed by users through 15 an Internet browser.

14. A method for negotiating transportation contracts through a computer network between a shipper and one or more carriers, comprising the steps of:

providing said shipper access to a computer server through said computer network, wherein a database resident on said server stores and maintains data associated with at least one request for quotation defining said shipper's transportation requirements and comprised of a plurality of transportation lanes; and

providing said one or more carriers access to said computer server through said computer network such that said carriers can review said at least one request for quotation and can submit bids on one or more transportation lanes that comprise said request for quotation.

5 15. A method as recited in claim 14, wherein can said shipper accessing the computer server can view bids submitted by said carriers and then can award transportation lanes to one or more of said carriers based on said submitted bids.

10 16. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein said carriers accessing the computer server can review awards made by said shipper and can accept the award of one or more transportation lanes.

15 17. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein said at least one request for quotation further comprises one or more accessorials, and wherein, when said one or more carriers review said at least one request for quotation, said carriers can also review said accessorials and can submit bids on said accessorials.

20 18. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein said at least one request for quotation further comprises at least one FAK bidding matrix, and wherein, when said one or more carriers review said at least one request for quotation, said carriers can also review said matrix and can submit bids on one or more transportation routes defined by said matrix.

19. A method as recited in claim 14, wherein said computer network is the World Wide Web portion of the global Internet.

20. A system as recited in claim 19, wherein said shipper and said carriers access to
5 said computer server through said computer network through an Internet browser.

21. A method for negotiating transportation contracts through a computer network in
which:

a shipper submits a request for quotation defining said shipper's transportation
10 requirements and comprised of a plurality of transportation lanes, said request for quotation
being stored and maintained on a computer server accessible through said computer network;
one or more carriers review said request for quotation by accessing said server
through said computer network, and said one or more carriers submit bids on one or more
transportation lanes comprising said request for quotation; and
15 said shipper awards one or more transportation lanes to one or more of said
carriers based on a review of the bids submitted by each said carrier.

22. A method as recited in claim 21 in which:

each of said carriers reviews awards of transportation lanes made by said shipper,
20 and then can accept the award of one or more transportation lanes.

23. A network for negotiating transportation contracts, including:
a multiplicity of individual carrier computers for accessing a database resident on
a central computer that is integrally connected to said network, said database storing and
maintaining identifying information related to said carrier computers;

5 at least one shipper computer for accessing the database resident on the central
computer that is integrally connected to said network, said database also storing and maintaining
identifying information related to said at least one shipper computer, and said database also
storing and maintaining data associated with at least one request for quotation comprised of a
plurality of transportation lanes;

10 wherein said carrier computers access said network to review said at least one
request for quotation; and
wherein said carrier computers can submit bids on one or more of the plurality of
transportation lanes comprising said request for quotation.

15 24. A network as recited in claim 23, wherein said central computer, in response to
the receipt of one or more bids on the plurality of transportation lanes comprising said request for
quotation, notifies said at least one shipper computer of such receipt.

20 25. A network as recited in claim 24, wherein said shipper computer, in response to
the notification from said central computer, can review bids submitted by said carriers, and then
can award transportation lanes to one or more carriers based on said submitted bids.

26. A system for communicating among shippers and carriers requests for quotations for shipping and bids for shipping through a computer network, comprising:

- (a) a database for storing and maintaining
 - (i) identifying information related to a plurality of users, said 5 users having registered with the system and being classified as either a shipper or a carrier, and
 - (ii) data associated with at least one request for quotation defining a particular shipper's transportation requirements and comprised of a plurality of transportation lanes; and
- (b) computer network access means for
 - (i) allowing access by one or more carriers for the review of 10 said request for quotations and for submitting bids to accomplish said transportation requirements including one or more of the plurality of transportation lanes, and
 - (ii) allowing said particular shipper to accept a particular carrier's bid from among one or more said carriers .

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